



United States  
Office of Personnel Management

# **FWS Job Grading Standard for**

# **Food Service Worker**

**7408**

**TS-63, 2/92**

**Workforce Compensation and Performance Service  
Classification Programs Division  
June 1998, HRCD-5**

## WORK COVERED

This standard covers nonsupervisory work involved in serving food and beverages and preparing simple food. It includes setting and waiting on tables where food service is informal; attending food counters; portioning and serving food; assembling trays for hospital patients; recording and retrieving patient diet and other food service information using a computer or manual file system; washing dishes, pots, pans, glasses, and silverware; transporting food, equipment, and supplies by manual or motorized carts; and assisting in food preparation by peeling potatoes, cutting vegetables, assembling and tossing salads, measuring and weighing ingredients, brewing coffee and tea, and mixing bulk fruit juices. In addition, the work typically includes sweeping, washing, mopping and buffing floors, and washing walls and ceilings.

## WORK NOT COVERED

This standard does not cover work that primarily involves:

- Performing laboring duties that require mainly physical abilities and effort and involve little or no specialized skill or prior work experience, such as loading and unloading trucks at loading docks, moving kitchen equipment and supplies, and collecting and disposing of trash. This work is excluded from the series when it is performed full time or when it represents the highest skill and qualification requirements of the job. (See [Job Grading Standard for Laborer Series, 3502.](#))
- Performing custodial duties such as sweeping, scrubbing, and waxing floors; washing windows, walls, and ceilings; dusting and polishing furniture and fixtures; and emptying waste cans. This work is excluded from the series when it is performed full time or when it represents the highest skill and qualification requirements of the job. (See [Job Grading Standard for Custodial Worker Series, 3566.](#))
- Preparing regular and special diet bakery products such as bread, rolls, cakes, cookies, pies, doughnuts, pastries, puddings, fillings, and icings. (See [Job Grading Standard for Baker Series, 7402.](#))
- Preparing regular or special diet foods and meals such as soups, gravies, sauces, meats, poultry, fish, shellfish, vegetables, desserts, and other foods. (See [Job Grading Standard for Cook Series, 7404.](#))
- Setting tables in a dining room with tablecloths, silverware, glasses, and napkins; serving the requested items in the prescribed manner; and cleaning the tables upon completion of the meal. (See [Job Grading Standard for Waiter Series, 7420.](#))

## TITLES

Jobs covered by this standard are to be titled *Food Service Worker*.

**7408-1****Food Service Worker****7408-1**

*General:* Grade 1 food service workers perform routine manual tasks with few steps that are easily learned and controlled. They work in one or more functional areas of the kitchen such as food preparation, dish and pot washing, dry and refrigerated storage and receiving, and the serving line.

Food service workers at grade 1 set up glasses, silverware, dishes, trays, napkins, condiments, and cold menu items such as salads, desserts, bread, and cold beverages on a serving line. They carry trays for ambulatory and wheelchair patients. They remove dishes and trays from tables after meals. They wash tables and counters and vacuum and shampoo carpets. Food service workers sort, wash, peel, and cut fresh fruits and vegetables. They operate, break down, and clean all electrical equipment assigned to the area for food preparation. They clean kitchen equipment such as worktables, sinks, and refrigerators. Food service workers at this level separate food waste and trash from dishes, glasses, and silverware in the dishwashing area. They load and operate dishwashers and silverware washing machines. They store sanitized dishes, glasses, and silverware.

Food service workers perform cleaning tasks in the food service area such as sweeping and mopping kitchen floors, cleaning windows and washing walls, and cleaning and sanitizing trash cans.

*Skill and Knowledge:* Grade 1 food service workers have an understanding of basic food handling techniques. They have skill and knowledge to perform routine manual tasks involving few steps. They have an understanding of personal hygiene standards and safe work procedures such as wearing a hairnet and a clean uniform daily, stacking dishes carefully to avoid mishaps, and wiping up spilled food or liquid promptly to prevent falls. They have the knowledge to read and understand written material such as time and duty schedules, safety data sheets for hazardous chemicals, menus, recipes, and basic work instructions. They have knowledge of basic arithmetic such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, and decimals.

*Responsibility:* Grade 1 food service workers receive limited assignments of a repetitive nature from their immediate supervisor or a higher grade employee. Work assignments and instructions at this level are typically oral. They are told when and how the work should be done. The work is performed the same way each time and is easily observed and checked.

*Physical Effort:* Food service workers at this grade level perform work requiring light to moderate physical effort. They are subject to continuous standing and walking, and frequent stooping, reaching, pushing, pulling, and bending. They frequently lift or move objects weighing up to 9 kilograms (20 pounds) unassisted (e.g., pushing small carts of dirty dishes) and occasionally lift or move objects weighing more than 9 kilograms (20 pounds) (e.g., filling beverage dispensers) with the assistance of other workers.

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*Working Conditions:* The work is performed in kitchen areas where the steam and heat from cooking and dishwashing equipment often cause uncomfortably high temperatures and humidity. The work area is well lighted but usually noisy from food service activities, and there is danger of slipping on floors where food or beverages have been dropped. Food service workers are regularly exposed to hot liquids, sharp cutting blades, hot working surfaces, and extreme temperature changes when entering walk-in refrigeration or freezing units.

**7408-2****Food Service Worker****7408-2**

*General:* Grade 2 food service workers perform tasks with several steps or a sequence of tasks that requires attention to work operations. They follow set procedures in accomplishing repetitive assignments and follow an established sequence of work.

Food service workers at grade 2 set up cafeteria lines, steam-tables, dining room tables, and side service stands with hot and cold food items including meats, vegetables, salads, desserts, bread, butter, and beverages. They serve food cafeteria style by placing uniform portions of food on customers' plates. They break down and clean their assigned area when the meal is finished and return food to the main kitchen. They set up dining room tables for service, place food and beverages on tables, and replenish items as necessary. They return soiled trays and dishes to the dishroom after meals. They deliver meal trays to the patient's bed. Food service workers brew coffee according to the number of servings required. They assemble and toss fresh fruit or green salads in quantity using prepared dressings and portion into standard serving sizes. They apportion other food items (e.g., gelatins, juices, and desserts) into standard serving sizes using the proper utensils and containers. They make cold sandwiches using prepared ingredients and pack box lunches. Food service workers at this level set up and operate a mechanical dishwasher, including the continuous conveyor belt feeding dishwasher. They remove inspection doors, strainer pans, screens, and spray arms for preventive maintenance and cleaning. Grade 2 food service workers scrape, soak, scour, and scrub the heavier cooking utensils such as mixing bowls and pots which, because of their large size and weight, are awkward to handle. Food service workers perform heavy-duty cleaning tasks throughout the food service and related areas, such as cleaning ceilings and transoms; cleaning exhaust hoods; cleaning spaces under and behind kitchen equipment, including moving the equipment; washing floors and walls with powered cleaning equipment; cleaning walk-in refrigerators and freezers; and sanitizing garbage rooms. Food service workers at this level may unload food from delivery trucks. They move heavy garbage cans when collecting and transferring trash from the work area to the disposal area.

*Skill and Knowledge:* Grade 2 food service workers have skill and knowledge to perform tasks involving several procedures. They have ability to concentrate on work assignments despite interruptions and distractions. They have knowledge of basic arithmetic in order to count the number of tables and meal trays required or determine the number of servings a container will yield. They have a working knowledge of sanitation standards, such as the need to keep wiping cloths in a sanitizing solution. They have a working knowledge of procedures to prevent contamination, such as the need to clean equipment previously used for raw food before further use and the need to use a chemical sanitizer or maintain proper water temperature when cleaning dishes.

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*Responsibility:* Grade 2 food service workers receive assignments from their immediate supervisor who provides specific instructions when changes in the work routine or new assignments are made. They are expected to work as scheduled, knowing what steps or sequence of tasks are needed to complete the work. Some judgment is used by these workers in maintaining established standards of sanitation, safety, and service. They are responsible for the correct operation and care of equipment such as mechanical dishwashers, potwashers, tray conveyors, and coffee urns. The supervisor is available to resolve problems and answer questions. The work is periodically checked to verify that it is being accomplished on time and according to instructions.

*Physical Effort:* In addition to the physical effort described at [grade 1](#), some food service workers at this level may be required to perform heavy work, such as scouring and scrubbing large-size cooking utensils and pushing heavy carts and trucks in unloading, storing, and delivering supplies. They also may be required to work on ladders and use powered cleaning equipment. They frequently lift or move objects weighing up to 18 kilograms (40 pounds).

*Working Conditions:* The working conditions are the same as those described at [grade 1](#).

**7408-3****Food Service Worker****7408-3**

*General:* Food service workers at grade 3 select and place food items on patient trays as they proceed down the tray assembly line according to a regular or modified menu, individual diet cards, or patient selections. They can identify obvious discrepancies between the prescribed diets and the food items designated by the menu. They decide what food items to serve for the most common diets when the diet card identifies only the kind of diet called for, such as a liquid diet or diabetic diet. They set up their assigned station on the tray line with the correct supplies and food items, and break down and clean the station after the serving period. Some workers deliver trays to the patient's bed and report the patient's comments and complaints to the supervisor or dietician. Food service workers at this level provide assistance to cooks in the food preparation area by weighing, measuring, and assembling ingredients according to standardized recipes. In some work situations, they prepare uncooked food items such as sandwich spreads and salad dressings.

*Skill and Knowledge:* Grade 3 food service workers apply knowledge of special procedures in preparing food and serving patients. They have skill to organize their work assignments in a logical sequence, execute tasks quickly and accurately, and meet strict meal schedules. They read and understand diet cards when working on the tray assembly line. They know color codes that signify regular or modified diets and special diet card notations. They memorize the most frequently used modified diets to place food items and beverages on the patient's tray, especially where the diet card indicates only the kind of diet and does not provide a precise listing of foods. They understand food terminology, measurements, and serving information in standardized recipes and regular and modified menus. They apply knowledge of general sanitation principles to safeguard food against spoilage and waste. For example, they are knowledgeable of the temperature range where the potential of bacterial growth in food is greatest and the requirement to keep hot food in heated holding equipment or immediately refrigerate it. They have knowledge and skill to apportion food items according to approved portion control practices, i.e., they use the correct measuring utensil or a portion control scale regularly and do not rely on visual estimates of food quantity. They have a thorough understanding of the routine methods and procedures used in all functional areas of the food service operation and skill to train lower grade workers in such methods and procedures.

*Responsibility:* Grade 3 food service workers complete assignments individually or as part of a team under the general supervision of the immediate supervisor. Assignments are made either orally or in writing. Detailed instructions are provided only for special projects. The work involving diet tray assembly is usually performed as a team with the worker being expected to know the commonly used diets in order to place items on a tray. Completed diet trays are checked by a higher level food service worker. Work involving actual food preparation is accomplished under the guidance of a cook who provides technical instruction and checks work in

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progress and upon completion for conformance with acceptable food service practices. Food service workers know daily routines and work from guides such as diet cards, menus, portion control charts, standardized recipes, and employee assignment sheets. Questions on unusual or difficult tasks are referred to a higher grade worker or supervisor for clarification and advice. Work at this level is evaluated in terms of accuracy and timely completion of assignments.

*Physical Effort:* The physical effort is the same as described at [grade 2](#).

*Working Conditions:* The working conditions are the same as those described at [grade 1](#).



**7408-4****Food Service Worker, Grade 4****7408-4**

*General:* Grade 4 food service workers perform duties that require proficiency in special procedures and a broad knowledge of service operations, such as food preparation, dishwashing, dry and refrigerated storage, and food and beverage serving.

Food service workers at grade 4 make the final check of diet trays assembled by lower grade workers for completeness, correct food temperature, and to verify that food items on the tray are appropriate for the prescribed diet. They conduct the daily patient census by distributing menus to patients. They provide patients with basic information about modified diets, such as explaining to a patient on a sodium restricted diet that canned vegetables must be eaten in moderation because they are typically high in salt, or telling a patient on a diabetic diet that, according to the exchange lists, cheese may be substituted for meat. Some grade 4 food service workers prepare individual and bulk nourishments and special feedings for patients. They follow directions in assembling, measuring, weighing, or mixing ingredients for basic formulas and other supplemental feedings. They take nourishment inventories, replace expired bulk items, and label and distribute individual nourishments to appropriate patients or nursing stations. They apply special sanitary techniques in preparing formulas and tube feedings such as sterilizing equipment and sanitizing work areas. Food service workers at this level weigh and measure food items and recipe ingredients. They use portion control scales and measuring devices to apportion individual items according to standardized recipes. They determine the quantities of ingredients needed to prepare required yields. They make conversions from the metric system to the U.S. standard system. They assemble, label, and arrange completed recipe items in preparation for use by cooks. Some grade 4 food service workers use a computer terminal to record and retrieve recipe, menu, and inventory data and to produce printouts of such information for various work units in the kitchen.

*Skill and Knowledge:* Grade 4 food service workers apply skill and knowledge in planning and organizing their work to complete assignments. They are knowledgeable of special procedures and sanitation principles necessary in the preparation of tube feedings to prevent bacterial contamination. They have skill in making precise measurements and accurately weighing recipe ingredients for special feedings. They have knowledge of proper techniques for measuring the volume of dry, liquid, and fat ingredients and in the use of portion control scales. They have skill in arithmetical computations using decimals, fractions, and percentages to determine the quantities of ingredients needed to prepare the required yields. They have a basic understanding of recipe construction. They have skill in measuring and weighing ingredients to adjust recipe yields according to standard procedures. Food service workers at this grade apply a thorough knowledge of basic modified diets when providing the final check on patient trays to verify that the food items are correct for the prescribed diet. They have a working knowledge of some diet principles, such as the diabetic exchange lists for meal planning. In some work situations, workers at this level are able to use a computer to enter and retrieve basic information, such as

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diet orders or recipe, menu, and inventory data. Food service workers at this level may carry out the function of a small work unit (e.g., in the nourishment unit they decide what supplies are needed, obtain supplies from other areas of the kitchen, prepare the number and kind of nourishments ordered from an ingredients list, label and distribute nourishments, and clean and sanitize the work area).

*Responsibilities:* Grade 4 food service workers receive limited supervision from the immediate supervisor. The supervisor provides oral and written instructions on changes in procedures and special requirements. Food service workers perform routine work independently in accordance with written guides and established policy. They use judgment in recognizing work objectives and in planning and organizing duties to accomplish those objectives. They refer questions on new work situations to the supervisor. Workers at this level may assist lower grade employees and provide training on technical work matters. The supervisor spot checks work in progress to be sure that set procedures are being followed and that work will be accomplished according to a specific time schedule.

*Physical Effort:* The physical effort is the same as described at [grade 2](#).

*Working Condition:* The working conditions are the same as those described at [grade 1](#).